(Mr. Jerkic, Observer, Yugoslavia)

respect for human rights. He appreciated the readiness of UNICEF to consider and help solve the problems of children in Central and Eastern Europe during their countries' transition to a market economy. In addition to the engagement by UNICEF, the regular programmes of assistance to developing countries should be maintained as the primary instrument in promoting the goals and strategies endorsed by the World Summit for Children.

5. Mr. MAHMOUD (Observer for Lebanon) said that the World Summit for Children, held at United Nations Headquarters on 30 September 1990, had been a unique event, having brought together 70 Heads of State or Government to discuss issues relating solely to children. Over the preceding year children throughout the world, whether in their homes or displaced, had continued to be exposed to natural disasters and disasters caused by man. Poverty, malnutrition, ignorance, disease, armed conflicts and natural disasters continued to take their toll of children's lives and hinder development. The efforts of Governments the dedication of UNICEF and the activities of non-governmental organizations were essential in limiting the impact of those brutal realities.

6. In his report entitled "Promises to keep", the Executive Director described the positive achievements in the service of children in developing countries, whose enormous problems required a vigorous international response. In that connection he noted that over the previous 15 years the Lebanese child had been an example of the suffering of children caused by war and its aftermath: displacement and loss of family, home, security and stability, in addition to the death of siblings and relatives, and, indeed, the total destruction of whole neighbourhoods and their population, leading children down the path of despair rather than to the schoolroom and a settled social life. The extreme poverty of the whole population, particularly over the past two years, had further lowered the standard of living and the capacity to provide necessary health services.

7. With the positive developments in the political and security domain, Lebanon was determined to confront its tragic conditions, with the aim of resuming its constructive role in the region and securing a peaceful and prosperous future for all its peoples, especially children. The tremendous challenges facing Lebanon in the near future necessitated the assistance of the international community in order to speed up the process of recovery. In that connection, UNICEF's activities in Lebanon over the previous 15 years, including the immunization campaign during the armed conflict, which, under the slogan of "United to protect the children", had been a unifying initiative in a shattered country, had been invaluable. During those difficult years UNICEF had been one of the few organizations which had stayed in Beirut, and it had played an important role in coordinating relief activities on behalf of United Nations agencies. Nevertheless, much more remained to be done - and urgently - since, as the Chairman had so rightly said, "the child could not wait".

8. Mrs. ADHAMLICH BENWANI (Observer for Morocco) said that her delegation had read with interest the report on UNICEF's programme strategies for the attainment of the objectives established in the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children (E/ICEF/1991/12). The timetable for 1991 and 1992 for the implementation of those objectives encompassed various priority questions, including the critical situation of children in Africa.

9. It should be recognized that over the past 30 years traditional societies had been fundamentally transformed, with meteoric demographic growth and rapid and unrestrained urbanization, destroying the old balances between the rural and urban worlds, and, at the same time, endangering the fragile balance of the environment. The result had been an international and national economic order which was frequently injust, a deterioration in the terms of trade and a worsening of inequality.

10. Many third world children, particularly in Africa, lived in unstable societies, often in the throes of disintegration, in unstructured family environments, and, above all, in unending poverty with no hope of improvement. In Africa more than 50 per cent of the population was under 15 years of age and, over the past three decades, the population had more than doubled. New forms of wretchedness and child exploitation were springing up: street children, and children who were sold or abandoned, or who were drug addicts or refugees, and whose numbers continued to grow as their countries sank into extreme poverty. To those should be added the children who were victims of hunger and AIDS. For all those reasons it was essential for the international community to maintain and strengthen its solidarity to assist in the execution of UNICEF programmes for the survival of the child and the goals established in the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

11. There was no doubt that UNICEF, in cooperation with other international agencies such as WHO, UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNDP, UNFPA and the non-governmental organizations working in the field, would be able to set up definitively in developing countries structures to provide education, reduce the birth rate, lower infant and maternal mortality rates and promote child spacing. Needless to say, education was the essential factor for guaranteeing a better future for generations to come. It was the key to development and an essential solution to many of the grave problems affecting third world countries. One could not speak of development without including education for girls in order to promote their participation as future women in the development process. That was one of the tasks that UNICEF had included in its programmes for the region of the Middle East and North Africa and which Morocco had always supported.

12. One could not forget either the serious consequences which the tragic Gulf war had had for the already vulnerable political situation and social and economic progress of developing countries, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. In its report, UNICEF indicated that poverty would increase considerably in that region and that, except for the petroleum-producing

(Mrs. Adhamlich Benwani, Observer, Morocco)

countries, the other States would experience setbacks in their development and run the risk of losing the advantages gained from the progress made in the area of child protection in recent years. In spite of all that, one must continue to hope that the countries of the region would be able to meet the challenges, maintaining and strengthening the programmes set up with UNICEF, especially those designed to relieve the suffering of the Palestinian children in the occupied territories.

13. Mrs. PADRON (Observer for Venezuela) said that her country had already convened a National Conference on the Rights of the Child, to be held from 27 to 29 August 1991. A presidential decree had set up a committee composed of eight ministers responsible for programmes related to the welfare of children, presidents of relevant autonomous institutes, members of various non-governmental organizations and so forth. The basic objective of the Conference would be to promote a sharing of responsibility by the public sector and the non-governmental sector with regard to the situation of children in Venezuela. The Conference was to evaluate the main programmes for children being developed by the two sectors and propose a national plan of action to reach the goals set for the year 2000 under the plan adopted at the World Conference for Children was to be proposed.

14. In that way, several of the recommendations set forth in paragraph 34 of the Plan of Action would be implemented since the Conference was designed to evaluate, monitor and adjust the measures being taken at the national level with regard to the survival, protection and development of children. Since the commission organizing the Conference was a mechanism for promoting communication and cooperation between the public sector and non-governmental organizations concerning children, it was possible to lay the foundation for the World Alliance for Children, which the Executive Director referred to in his report (E/ICEF/1991/2 (Part I)). In that connection, plans had been made to set up preparatory committees for regional conferences in order to implement in each of the federal divisions programmes for children at the federal and state level.

15. To ensure the success of the Conference, her country required the technical support of the academic sector and the considerable technical and financial assistance of UNICEF, approved through the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, those monitoring and evaluation measures would not serve any purpose if at the same time programmes with far-reaching social impact were not carried out, such as those which the Government of Venezuela had been implementing since the beginning of 1989 and which were part of a social policy to protect the poor within the framework of the macroeconomic adjustment required by the situation in the country.

16. The economic imbalances that had been experienced by other Latin American countries since the 1960s had only come about in Venezuela 20 years later because it was a petroleum producing and exporting country. Aware of the fact that corrective measures would lead to a further deterioration of living

(Mrs. Padron, Observer, Venezuela)

standards, the Government had put into effect in February 1989 a social policy based on mechanisms designed to protect the poorest sectors of the population in a compensatory effort to meet their priority needs. With regard to objectives, the strategy's point of reference was the goal of "adjustment with a human face", which UNICEF had promoted since the beginning of the 1980s.

17. For 1991, about 85 per cent of the approximate $1 billion allocated for programmes for the poor were to be used for programmes for children in three priority sectors: nutrition, maternal-and-child health and pre-school and basic education. The system of food subsidies distributed through the pre-school and basic education network, which was a basic part of those programmes, would benefit 2.5 million children by the end of 1991, in other words, more than 60 per cent of the pupils enrolled at those levels. Indirectly, the system had served to encourage enrolment and reduce school drop-out rates. By broadening the maternal and child health services, her Government hoped to reach in 1991 100 per cent of the target population, a group of 2 million children and 600,000 mothers in the poor sectors of the population. The ultimate objective of the programme was to improve nutritional levels and reduce infant and maternal morbidity and mortality rates.

18. The two programmes referred to were only part of the measures taken to promote the survival, protection and development of children. Nevertheless, since they represented a sizeable social investment, which, by the end of 1991, would reach approximately 4.5 million children - more than 50 per cent of the population under the age of 14 - they demonstrated the priority given to that field. The cooperation of international agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO and, particularly, UNICEF, had been instrumental in ensuring the effective implementation of those programmes. Her Government was grateful for the receptive manner with which UNICEF had considered its requests and commended the financing provided by mechanisms such as the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean (SAFLAC), which had helped Venezuela cope with an emergency social situation and budgetary constraints and also reduce the social cost of the short-term adjustment policy.

19. The Fund had provided support for the agreement between Colombia and Venezuela on the protection of children, the only such agreement between countries with migrant populations. In order to maintain that response capacity, UNICEF must be provided in the next few years with the resources necessary for its proper functioning. In that regard, Venezuela viewed with concern any budgetary restriction that might affect the programmes proposed by the Executive Director. Lastly, she expressed her country's support for the draft resolution on cholera sponsored by Peru.

20. Mr. RADULIAN (Observer for Romania), speaking as Chairman of the Romanian National Committee for UNICEF, expressed gratitude for the emergency assistance provided in the past year to Romania in order to improve the

(Mr. Radulian, Observer, Romania)

situation of children that had been inherited from the totalitarian regime. In January 1991, the UNICEF international office in Bucharest had begun operations and the National Committee hoped to maintain excellent relations of cooperation with it.

21. Romania, like the other countries of Eastern Europe, was going through a period of transition towards a market economy that required great economic and social sacrifices. Those difficulties were compounded by the rise in prices and a scarcity of goods, particularly food products and medicine. International solidarity and the support of UNICEF constituted not only the sole means of overcoming the difficulties, but also the most useful investment for the future. The results achieved during the year through the activities of the Romanian National Committee, such as the sale of 500,000 greeting cards and the social mobilization of the people, gave rise to the hope that the temporary assistance received might increase tenfold in coming years for the benefit of children in other parts of the world.

22. Romania had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Committee, in collaboration with the human rights commissions of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, and with the participation of lawyers and other experts, had considered ways of incorporating its provisions into national legislation. Work on a new Constitution had already begun, and a proposal had been submitted to Parliament to include in it provisions relating to protection of the mother, the child and the family.

23. In January 1991, the Romanian National Committee for UNICEF had become an independent, representative and pluralistic non-governmental organization. In a short space of time, it had managed to attract individuals, entities and groups concerned with improving children's health, nutrition, development and education. In that spirit, the Committee had launched a campaign on the theme of a "first call for children", and was preparing a number of activities to mobilize public support for UNICEF and its objectives. Those activities included the proclamation of June as the "Month of the Child", with childhood being designated as "the springtime of life", and the holding during that month of a gala benefit on the theme of "The world belongs to children" and a colloquium to discuss the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Consideration was also being given to setting up a children's parliament, where children's problems would be discussed and their concerns aired so as to help guide the future action of parents and teachers.

24. The Committee, which in September 1990 had drafted the "Report on the situation of children in Romania" in collaboration with the International Child Development Centre at Florence, Italy, was planning to conduct two other studies, one on families in time of social and economic transition, and the other on children in the urban environment. Moreover, the Committee was also taking part, in collaboration with the Institute for the Quality of Life and the two government ministries concerned, in a broad study entitled "Social and educational strategies for detecting, preventing and controlling vagrancy and juvenile delinquency".

25. Mrs. KABA-CAMARA (Observer for Côte d'Ivoire) said that, despite the existing unfavourable economic conditions which had banished all hope that international resources would be mobilized for the development of the poor countries, the fact that, in 1990, children had been the international community's central concern was a positive sign. The entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the adoption of the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s were evidence of a political will to give special attention to children. However, most countries of sub-Saharan Africa lacked the resources needed to translate that will into concrete action.

26. After achieving its independence, Côte d'Ivoire had experienced a period of relative economic prosperity which had been reflected in substantial social progress, particularly in the educational field. However, the drop in the price of exports and the debt burden had hampered social development and had plunged the country into an unprecedented economic crisis. Like many African countries, Côte d'Ivoire required external support for its efforts to revive the economy.

27. In the health field, regrettably, AIDS and malaria continued to claim many victims, raising bleak prospects for Africa, and the Executive Board should turn its attention to them. All efforts should focus on reducing extreme poverty by radically increasing bilateral and multilateral development assistance to Africa in order to pave the way for social progress which would bring with it greater well-being for women and children. In that connection, UNICEF had allocated 37 per cent of its resources to Africa and had increased the number of its field offices.

28. Although the increase in resources for headquarters should not be at the expense of field activities, the Executive Board should nonetheless bear in mind that in order to achieve satisfactory results in the field, a proper balance must be struck between programme expansion and the needs of the central administration.

29. Mr. TRINH XUAN LANG (Observer for Viet Nam) said that his delegation was strongly convinced that all the positive developments of recent years relating to the commitment to child survival and development were the result of an impressive movement for children, namely, UNICEF. UNICEF emergency relief operations had been highly effective in catalysing and supporting national efforts, particularly when most developing countries were confronted with severe socio-economic difficulties and the challenges of adjustment and development. In many countries, time and field experience had illustrated the value of the approaches, measures and techniques advocated by UNICEF.

30. The world was currently facing many issues, such as the environment, population, external debt, AIDS, poverty and development, which had a great impact on the development process of countries and, accordingly, on the quality of life and growth of children. His delegation welcomed UNICEF's

(Mr. Trinh Xuan Lang, Observer, Viet Nam)

initiatives and its close collaboration with other specialized agencies in addressing children's issues within the broader context of global problems; he especially appreciated its innovative approach in incorporating environmental components into child survival and development programmes.

31. Viet Nam had been one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it had been busy since then preparing supplementary legislation. In spite of numerous difficulties, his country firmly upheld the important principle of giving priority to children's concerns, survival and full development. Viet Nam was facing the same problems as most other low-income developing countries, and its efforts had been hampered by limited financial resources. Accordingly, his Government greatly appreciated UNICEF assistance programmes. UNICEF had channelled international cooperation and assistance to the people and Government of Viet Nam, and had been a valuable source of encouragement and support to them.

32. Mr. KORUTURK (Observer for Turkey), while expressing satisfaction at the progress reflected in the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1991/2 (Parts I and II)), said that he shared the latter's concern at the problems that still remained and that must be overcome, bearing in mind the principle of a "first call for children" set forth in the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s. At the same time, he welcomed the success of the world-wide universal child immunization campaign and noted that maintaining and enhancing its results should be the fundamental goal of the UNICEF cooperation programme. In Turkey, the success of the immunization campaign begun in 1985 was due to both the Government's efforts and the cooperation and support of UNICEF. However, universal child immunization was a goal which still required substantial efforts.

33. Children's health and well-being depended in large measure on the health and well-being of their mothers, who played a central role in the implementation of UNICEF programmes. Accordingly, priority should be given to programmes for mothers and pregnant women. In that connection, Turkey appreciated the importance which UNICEF attached to activities for the advancement of women, and actively supported all measures designed to achieve the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in the maternal mortality rate.

34. Mr. AUGUSTE (Observer for Haiti) said that the objectives established by the World Summit for Children were of extreme urgency, and would remain valid so long as the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of children remained wanting. Reducing infant mortality, maternal mortality, chronic malnutrition and illiteracy rates and ensuring universal access to drinking water, sanitation and basic education, as advocated by the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, were the fundamental tasks of a humane civilization; peoples, governments, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations should devote themselves to those tasks, as UNICEF was already doing in a very special way.

(Mr. Auguste, Observer, Haiti)

35. UNICEF should maintain its approach which consisted of viewing issues as interrelated, since close and harmonious coordination between UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, the World Bank, UNDP and others would facilitate its task and expedite the solution of problems which were of concern to all. It was important to show clearly what proportion of programme resources was allocated to experts participating in project execution, and to research and studies commissioned outside the country concerned, so it could be seen how much went to social investment and how much went to collateral services. In that regard, it was important not to get carried away when adopting decisions on research and documentation since usually there were already monographs which merely required updating.

36. It was also important to ensure that the functions and obligations which UNICEF assumed were not disproportionate to its resources, which might not remain at the current level, and to consider the possibility of using contributions from other sources. Upon retiring, international staff could supervise non-governmental organizations which met certain requirements; their proven expertise could be especially beneficial to their countries of origin. Those suggestions did not detract from the importance of the work which UNICEF was carrying out around the world.

37. Because of its integrated approach, the Executive Board's activity had taken various directions and it had even sought solutions to the effects of structural adjustment on social programmes, but it must not stray from the fundamental and primary functions of UNICEF nor duplicate the efforts of other organizations in those areas. That integrated approach should be supplemented by similar strategies aimed at achieving a political commitment at the national and international level; at developing concrete plans of action based on the fundamental goals set for the year 2000; at assigning appropriate budget resources to achieve those goals; at mobilizing women and children to that end; and at achieving sustained and durable international cooperation on programmes related to health, education, poverty reduction, the fight against environmental degradation, etc. There was a human dimension to the philosophy of the Executive Board, which tended not to limit itself to considerations of economic growth but to attach importance above all to social indicators.

38. Two aspects should be emphasized in defining the principles that governed UNICEF activities, namely, the democratic dimension and the urgent need to carry out concrete plans of action at the national and the international level. Haiti's present Government was determined to tackle the principal social problems and had mobilized the community to that end. The time had come to reactivate the UNICEF programme to facilitate attainment of the minimum level of well-being without which democracy could be no more than a deceit.

39. Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Observer for Mongolia), having given a brief account of the main international activities carried out in 1990 in favour of children, said that he agreed with those speakers who had emphasized the importance of maintaining the momentum and promoting practical action at the national and international level. His delegation supported the measures proposed by UNICEF in the Programme of Action for Achieving the Goals for Children and Development in the 1990s (E/ICEF/1991/12).

40. The vaccine research initiative and the new nutrition strategy approved by the Executive Board at its previous session deserved full support since they were valuable guidelines for the development of appropriate national policies and strategies. His delegation noted with gratitude that UNICEF was undertaking to carry out studies and organize training programmes and seminars whose final results had practical importance for developing countries. It would be good for such studies to be distributed as widely and as quickly as possible among those countries.

41. After pointing out that Mongolia had been among the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child and describing some of its important achievements in the field of health and education, he said that measures aimed at increasing children's quality of life were an integral part of the renewal policy followed by the new multiparty Government. Those measures included the comprehensive maternal and child welfare plan up to the year 2000 and the new pensions act, as well as new measures for improving the plight of vulnerable groups, and were being implemented despite the great difficulties the country was experiencing in its efforts to achieve economic development and move to a market economy. None the less, everything possible was being done to increase international cooperation and mobilize other financial and material resources. In that regard, he thanked UNICEF for the substantial increase in assistance to Mongolia envisaged in the country programme for the period 1991-1995. A UNICEF office would shortly be established in Mongolia and would contribute to the continued strengthening of their cooperation.

42. Mr. BRANCO (Sao Tome and Principe) noted that his country had achieved universal child immunization in 1990, in part thanks to UNICEF's support. He referred to the process of democratization in Sao Tome and Principe, as a result of which the population looked to the future with renewed confidence and with the hope that it could count on the solidarity of the international community.

43. While his delegation believed that UNICEF could overcome the obstacles that would certainly be encountered in pursuing its goals, it did not underestimate the nature of the problems nor the need to introduce the necessary adjustments in UNICEF's structure and modus operandi. The resources available should be directed as much as possible to operational activities in the field, especially in Africa, and should be concentrated at the national level on those programmes that constituted clearly established priorities. He called the attention of Board members to the additional funding needs of his country's programme.

44. Mr. CORREIA (Observer for Angola), after briefly outlining the measures taken by the Government of Angola since independence for the benefit of women and children, emphasized the seriousness of the plight of those groups, especially in the zones most affected by drought and armed conflict. With respect to the country programme (E/ICEF/1991/P/L.3), he said that the immediate causes of the high infant mortality rate were neonatal tetanus, diarrhoeal diseases and malaria.

45. He explained the causes of the destruction of the country's economic and social infrastructure and the measures taken by the Government to find a peaceful solution to the armed conflict, and emphasized the importance of the resolution on the economic rehabilitation of Angola adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

46. With respect to cooperation with UNICEF, his delegation would be presenting a new plan of action for the next five years that could be adapted to the new reality of prospects for peace in the country and in southern Africa. He thanked the international community for the humanitarian aid given to Angola, urged the Executive Director to continue his efforts to raise the necessary resources to save the thousands of Angolans who were at risk, and expressed satisfaction that Africa was one of UNICEF's priorities.

47. Mr. MacDONALD (Observer for Australia) recalled that on 26 September 1924, the League of Nations had adopted a Declaration of the Rights of the Child which had confirmed its belief that all children, regardless of their situation, had the right to the means of their material and spiritual development. In September 1990, the international community had adopted a similar but more comprehensive declaration on the survival, protection and development of children in the 1990s, and had drawn up a Plan of Action for implementing it. Although there was still a lag between the commitment to the welfare of children and the practical action taken to achieve it, there was no doubt that UNICEF could be justly proud of the progress it had made and continued to make towards bettering the lot of children. The existence of children in need and poverty was not a testament to UNICEF's failure, but more an indictment of humanity's folly.

48. With the resources made available to it, UNICEF had made immense inroads into alleviating the plight of children, and his delegation fully supported the programmes that had emerged. UNICEF's central focus on basic child health programmes should remain, along with related programmes on water, sanitation and nutrition; linked to such programmes as universal child immunization, attention to primary health care infrastructure was necessary to ensure the sustainability of the immunization programme.

49. His delegation welcomed the initiative adopted at the previous session on acute respiratory infection and looked forward to the 1992 interim paper on its progress. It also applauded the attention to breast-feeding programmes and endorsed the initiatives in that area. Another important general programme aspect was the training of birth attendants. Too few countries in

(Mr. MacDonald, Observer, Australia)

the Asian region gave due emphasis to that appropriate technology, preferring instead to focus on capital-intensive and high-technology doctor training.

50. While Australia recognized the continuing need for UNICEF services in Africa, it should not be forgotten that the Asian region still held the majority of the world's poor children. In that regard, Australia was pleased to see a programme paper seeking the Board's approval for additional funds for Papua New Guinea. His delegation also recognized the needs of children in Eastern Europe but would not want to see the diversion of scarce resources intended for children in developing countries. It therefore emphasized the short-term nature of such assistance.

51. At a time of very restricted aid budgets, it was both unrealistic and impractical to expect growth rates in the UNICEF budget in the 1990s to be maintained at anything like the 1990 rate. On the issue of staff resources, his delegation could only assume that the secretariat's request for such high numbers of additional and upgraded staff was based on the expectation of having its bid reduced.

52. Lastly, he pointed out that UNICEF Australia played a vital and noble role in reminding all Australians of UNICEF's central mandate, namely, the welfare of the world's needy children.

The meeting rose at 8.25 p.m.